

**DECISIONS SHOULD NOT BE IMPLEMENTED BEFORE
MONDAY 14 DECEMBER 2015**

CABINET

1 December 2015

PRESENT – Councillor Dixon (in the Chair); Councillors Copeland, Harker, C L B Hughes, McEwan and A J Scott. (6)

INVITEES – Councillors Curry, I G Haszeldine and Mrs H Scott. (3)

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE – Councillors Coultas, Crichlow, Donoghue, Johnson, Mills and Tostevin. (6)

APOLOGIES – Councillor Wallis.

C78. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST – There were no declarations of interest reported at the meeting.

C79. KEY DECISIONS - (1) Medium Term Financial Plan - The Leader introduced the report of the Chief Officers Executive (previously circulated) requesting that consideration be given to amending the existing Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP); to agreeing an approach to further revise the MTFP in the New Year following the Local Government Finance settlement; and proposing a 2016/17 Budget and Council Tax increase for consultation.

In introducing the report, the Leader reported at the meeting that the Government had announced in the Autumn Statement that Council's with responsibility for adult social care would be able to levy a 'precept' of two per cent on top of the current council tax referendum limit to help fund the increasing cost of social care and that as a result of that announcement the Director of Neighbourhood Services and Resources had circulated an amended report and MTFP for 2016/17.

The submitted report, as amended, stated that between 2010/11 to 2015/16, the Council had faced unprecedented financial challenges following the Governments response to the economic downturn and that reductions in planned expenditure of £35.3m had already been agreed. The Local Government Finance settlement, which was expected late December, would provide the Council with their grant settlement for a minimum of one year but possibly three and given the timing of the settlement a two stage approach was proposed to revising the MTFP.

Particular references were made at the meeting to the reduction in the use of revenue balances and to the role of the Council's Scrutiny Committees in the budget process.

RESOLVED - (a) That the 2016/17 budget, as set out in Appendix 8 of the submitted report, as amended, be approved for consultation including the following:

- (i) Council Tax increase of 3.99 per cent for 2016/17 and subsequent years;
- (ii) schedule of charges as set out in Appendix 3 of the submitted report; and

(iii) use of £1.613m revenue balances to fund the budget gap in 2016/17.

(b) That the 2016/17 to 2019/20 Medium Term Financial Plan be reviewed in February 2016.

REASONS - (a) The Council must set a budget for the next financial year.

(b) To enable the Council to continue to plan services and finances over the medium term.

(c) To ensure decisions can be made in a timely manner.

(2) Housing Revenue Account – MTFP 2016/17 To 2020/21 - The Cabinet Member with Adult Social Care and Housing Portfolio introduced the report of the Director of Neighbourhood Services and Resources (previously circulated) requesting that consideration be given to proposals for the revenue budget, rent levels and service charges for the Council's Housing Revenue Account (HRA) for the financial year 2016/17 in the context of the HRA Medium Term Financial Plan to 2019/20 and the 30 year Business Plan.

Particular references were made at the meeting to the implications of the loss of housing association properties due to the 'Right to Buy' scheme and to the involvement of the Council's Scrutiny Committees in the consultation process on the HRA.

RESOLVED – That the following be recommended for consultation, namely that:-

(a) the Equalities Impact Assessment, as appended at Appendix 5 of the submitted report, be given full consideration before making any decisions;

(b) an average weekly rent reduction of 1% for 2016/17 be implemented giving an average rent of £72.17;

(c) all social rents be converted to affordable rents, as properties become available to let, where this would result in an increase in the overall charge;

(d) garage rents and service charges be increased, as shown in Table 3 of the submitted report, including an administration fee of 10 per cent where applicable;

(e) the standard charge be implemented from April 2016 for properties previously excluded from pavement crossing and hard-standing charges;

(f) the budget, as appended at Appendix 1 of the submitted report, be approved;

(g) the Housing Business Plan, as appended at Appendix 2 of the submitted report, be agreed.

(h) the results of consultation be presented to a special meeting of Cabinet in February 2016.

REASONS - (a) To enable the Council to deliver an appropriate level of service to tenants to meet housing need and to support the economic growth of the Borough through housing development.

(b) To allow the results of consultation to be considered before final decisions are made.

**DECISIONS DATED –
FRIDAY 4 DECEMBER 2015**